

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Projection of Orientalistic Ethos in Adiga's *The White Tiger*

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and
Social Sciences, Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English**

By

Amrit Sintan

T.U. Regd. 6-1-341-3-2003

March 2013

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Projection of the Orientalistic Ethos in Adiga’s *The White Tiger*” submitted to the Department of English, by Amrit Sintan, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Examiner

Raj Kumar Baral

External Examiner

Chiranjibi Kafle

Head of the Department of English

Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus

Chiranjibi Kafle

Date: 3rd April, 2013

Acknowledgements

It was the most exhilarating moment in my life when I was permitted to work on this dissertation. I would like to express my great sense of gratitude to my respected research supervisor Raj Kumar Baral, lecturer at the Department of English Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus , for his invaluable supervision, constructive help and guideline, which helped me to give the final shape of this thesis. Had there not been his help and guidance, this dissertation could not have appeared in the present form.

I am deeply indebted to Chiranjibi Kafle, Head of Department of English, and all other respected lecturers of the Department, who played vital role in the completion of this dissertation. I also owe the highest level of thankfulness to my father Purna Bahadur Sintan and mother Kanchi Sintan who are the constant source of inspiration for me to go ahead in the completion of any creative work. My sincere thanks go to my brothers and sisters whose warm enthusiasm always boosts me in my scholarly pursuit.

I also take this moment to thank my sisters, brothers, friends and relatives for their moral and academic support. Certain degree of my gratefulness goes to M. M. Computer for its uninterrupted technical help.

February 2013

Amrit Sintan

Abstract

Adiga's *The White Tiger* shows how the Orientalistic biases are reflected in the contemporary depiction of India. Biases and organized distortion of Indian culture have taken place in the representation of contemporary India. On the one hand the shifting modernist sides of India are represented. On the other, the backward and superstitious sides of India are still in a powerful condition. In *The White Tiger*, India is shown struggling to come out of the cocoon of the poverty, backwardness and superstition. India is still bizarre and inscrutable to those whose mindsets are shaped and sustained by the flourishing grace of westernized modernity, globalization and technology transfer. By using the perspective of neo-orientalism, the researcher wants to show how the organized biases against India's progressive march have sought deceptive forms. Though the author is an Indian, his way of handling the shifting horizons of Indian culture and history is largely affected by metropolitan mentality.

Contents

	Page No.
Letter of Approval	
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
I. Representation of Indians in Adiga's <i>The White Tiger</i>	1-15
II. Neo-orientalism: A Survey	16-34
III. Projection of Orientalist Ethos in ArvindaAdiga's <i>The White Tiger</i>	35-49
IV. Adiga's Orientalist Reflection in <i>The White Tiger</i>	49-51
Works Cited	52-53

I. Representation of Indians in Adiga's *The White Tiger*

Arvinda Adiga's *The White Tiger* has made controversial representation of modern India. Modern India has undergone drastic change. While representing modern India, Adiga has used some of the same orientalist stereotypes which some of the famous orientalist had used while depicting India. Adiga has done justice to the contemporary condition of modern India. He has not hesitated to explore and enumerate some of the glorious feats and achievements of the contemporary India. Yet he is not totally free from the charge of looking into modern India from the orientalist ethos.

It has achieved remarkable progress in the field of industrialization, technology and welfare economics. Some of the bright and beautiful aspects of modern India are depicted in this novel. The spirit of modernity has been captured by the novelist in *The White Tiger*. Reality regarding to India's exposure to technology transfer is documented accurately in this novel. But while depicting the emerging realities of India, the novelist relies upon the orientalist attitude and approach. Adiga is an Indian. And he is loyal to the emerging realities of the contemporary India. But unconsciously he is prone to depend upon the orientalist stereotype. Orientalist stereotypes are the point of view of western European scholars about India and other south Asian and Arabic countries. Some of the orientalist conceptions and stereotypes are that India is darkly mysterious. It is inscrutable. It hardly undergoes change. It is incapable of self-governance. People dwelling in India are fond of penance and meditation. They are overtly spiritual and transcendental. They are less interested in the management of daily affairs of earthly and material life. Lack of pragmatic concern and crisis in rationality are some of the qualities of India and Indians. These sorts of traditional assumptions about the orient in general and India in

particular are called orientalist stereotypes. These stereotypes are used by Adiga in *The White Tiger*. While viewing the present day India, these orientalist biases are used consciously or unconsciously by the novelist.

On the one hand, Adiga represents vast possibility of economic boom created by IT revolution in the contemporary India. At the background of IT revolution, the widening gap between the rich and the poor is also reflected. IT revolution and ensuing economic boom are the modern realities. But the growing socio-economic chasm is the orientalist reality which was available in the old discourses of orientalism. The IT revolution works as the foil to dramatize and foreground the reality regarding orientalism. In the novel, Mr. Ashok is the business tycoon. He represents one aspect of booming Indian economy. Balaram Haluwai is lay man who belongs to the ordinary walk of life. He is born in the poor family. But he is goaded by the dangerous ambition of becoming a prosperous entrepreneur. His fervent and formidable will to succeed at any cost has made him a criminal. He learnt to drive a vehicle by quitting the job of a menial worker in hotel. His skill in driving paves the way for the favorable ground where his diabolic dream can come true.

While working as the personal driver of Stock's son, he knows many secrets about Ashok's family, his dream and his inner life. The more Balaram Haluwai knows secret things about Ashok, the more dreadful plan he fabricates. Balaram simply represents irrational longing for the fulfillment of dream at any cost. Rationality is fully absent in his life. Balaram is mysteriously megalomaniac in the pursuit of his dream. Once, he drove his master's car. At the moment of his master's helplessness, Balaram kills his master, and absconds with his master's huge amount of money to the southern India. The momentary impulses and irrationality have become the ruling passion of Balaram's life.

The theme of rags to riches is the significant issue of the discourse of orientalism. Balaram Haluwai comes from the common walk of life. But he becomes tycoon and millionaire with the money he absconded by killing Stock's son. It is assumed that a lay man becoming a millionaire is the striking theme of orientalist thinking. It is the assumption that rags to riches is the distinguishing features of this novel. In the modern India as reflected in Adiga's *The White Tiger*, corrupt is rampant. Religious pogrom and ethnic unrest are imminent.

Tradition, orthodoxy, bigotry, superstition and oriental exoticism are some of the hindrances that have affected the culmination of India in the modernist way. Though India is said to have been transformed by the importation and transfer of technology, its core structure has still remained the same. In some of the complexes and office rooms cockroaches and internet amenity coexist to the utter dismay of those who stand in favor of the modernity. In the current India represented in *The White Tiger*, bigotry and free thought, superstition and modernity, immobility and change, spirituality and scientific awakening have coexisted. This coexistence of binary opposite makes India revert to the same mould of orientalist awakening. Growing lawlessness, anarchy, corruption, declining foundation of democracy is the hallmark of present day India. These traits are the part and parcel of India as represented in the discourse of orientalism.

The murderer and criminal Balaram has emerged as the flourishing tycoon. But the legal and administrative system of India can't take any firm action. If felon and criminal freely and fearlessly walk, can't the researcher guess that there is the lack of justice, law and system? Only the outer surface of India has undergone change. But its inner core has remained the same. Amorphous Mumbai city, hustle and bustle of the south, weak foundation of democracy, irrational and crazy urges of Indians, gap

between the rich and the poor, the firm hold of superstition and orthodoxy are undeniably vital features of contemporary India. The persistence and embeddedness of these characteristics in *The White Tiger* are almost analogous to the orientalist ethos primarily invented by the orientalist.

According to Adiga, the contemporary India is not ready to yield to the spirit of complete transformation. However powerful and invincible the trend of modernity, India's cultural tradition and its intuitively transcendental culture have posed hurdle to the onrush of modernity. The obstinacy of Indian tradition and its xenophobic hatred to the true spirit of modernity have made India really inscrutable. Neither cultural nor spiritual heritage have saved its integrity nor has the newness of modernity transformed India completely. It is a matter of contention that India has achieved breakthrough in the traditional pattern of its existence. Has India really changed or is it still the same? This question has been the vital concern of the present research. To Adiga, India still bears some of those characteristics which orientalists had found and discussed.

According to Adiga, India still retains some of characteristics which orientalists had found while conducting anthropological inquiry. In the early decades of the twenty first century, India has still possessed the same orientalist qualities that India is static, and bizarre, that it is incapable of self-governance and that Indians are irrational and spiritual. Facts are abhorrent to Indians. Tradition and abstract metaphysics are of immense importance to the Indians. Indians are lethargic to change, modernity and technological innovation. Viewed from the perspective of Adiga's understanding of the contemporary India, orientalist mentality has still underscored the current conception and perception. Neo-orientalism is a term, often used pejoratively, to describe modern incarnations of Orientalist thinking. The term is

often used in academic literature to critique Western attitudes to Islam and the Islamic world. It is a means of articulating a subordinating discourse regarding populations and societies associated with Islam. Edward Said's evaluation and critique of the set of beliefs known as Orientalism forms an important background for postcolonial studies. His work highlights the inaccuracies of a wide variety of assumptions as it questions various paradigms of thought which are accepted on individual, academic, and political levels.

The researcher makes use of the tool of Said's concepts of orientalism as defined in his famous book *Orientalism*. Said's Orientalism is the deconstructive reading of the western discourses of orientalism. His deconstructive insight is used as the major theoretical framework. Said argues that Orientalism can be found in current Western depictions of "Arab" cultures. The depictions of "the Arab" as irrational, menacing, untrustworthy, anti-Western, dishonest, and--perhaps most importantly--prototypical, are ideas into which Orientalist scholarship has evolved. These notions are trusted as foundations for both ideologies and policies developed by the Occident. Said writes: "The hold these instruments have on the mind is increased by the institutions built around them. For every Orientalist, quite literally, there is a support system of staggering power, considering the ephemerality of the myths that Orientalism propagates. The system now culminates into the very institutions of the state." (76)

To write about the Arab Oriental world and India, therefore, is to write with the authority of a nation, and not with the affirmation of a strident ideology but with the unquestioning certainty of absolute truth backed by absolute force. Said continues to argue:

One would find this kind of procedure less objectionable as political propaganda--which is what it is, of course--were it not accompanied by sermons on the objectivity, the fairness, the impartiality of a real historian, the implication always being that Muslims and Arabs cannot be objective but that Orientalists, writing about Muslims are, by definition, by training, by the mere fact of their being western. This is the culmination of Orientalism as a dogma that not only degrades its subject matter but also blinds its practitioners. (254)

Said calls into question the underlying assumptions that form the foundation of Orientalist thinking. A rejection of Orientalism entails a rejection of biological generalizations, cultural constructions, and racial and religious prejudices. It is a rejection of greed as a primary motivating factor in intellectual pursuit. It is an erasure of the line between the West and the other. Said argues for the use of narrative rather than vision in interpreting the geographical landscape known as the Orient, meaning that a historian and a scholar would turn not to a panoramic view of half of the globe, but rather to a focused and complex type of history that allows space for the dynamic variety of human experience.

Rejection of Orientalist thinking does not entail a denial of the differences between the West and the Orient, but rather an evaluation of such differences in a more critical and objective fashion. The Orient cannot be studied in a Non-Orientalist manner; rather, the scholar is obliged to study more focused and smaller culturally consistent regions. The person who has until now been known as 'the Oriental' must be given a voice. Scholarship from afar and second-hand representation must take a back seat to narrative and self-representation on the part of the Oriental.

Adiga is the flourishing writer who has held sway over the Indian psyche of collective wellbeing. He attends to the reality pertaining to the different sectors of socio-political life. His first novel *The White Tiger* has achieved exceptional limelight. It is Adiga's first novel. It has called into question some of the snobberies and prejudices of the contemporary India. In this novel he is wholly critical of the fact that modernity should conquer the tradition.

Arvinda Adiga's *The Last Man in Tower* demonstrates the resistance against the regime of late capitalism. In the late capitalism extreme hunger and hankering after money, Moloch and materialism have reached the climax. Genuine concern for humanity and ethical ideals has emigrated from the dark zone of metropolitan mega cities of India. Human beings have been trapped in the clutch and confinement of capitalist dehumanization and domination. Innocent people are unable to give vent to their fierce sense of opposition to the insensitivity and indifference of the corrupting ideology of late capitalism. Whenever they are forced to make the choice between life and death, they tend to remain silent and resigned. They are hardly vocal and vehement against the atrocious and arid ideology of business tycoons and money mongers.

Arvinda Adiga's *The White Tiger* has received a wide range of critical reception and appreciation different critics have given their opinions and views about this novel. A large number of critics have treated this novel in positive light. But opinions are sure to vary. Arthur James Sebastian has lauded Adiga for representing the growing gap between the rich and poor. He contends that this novel focuses upon the life-like representation of the growing distance between the rich and the poor. The following citation justifies Sebastian's viewpoint regarding *The White Tiger*.

Aravinda Adiga's *The White Tiger* is singular in its fictionalized portrayal of the relationship between Balram Halwai and his master Mr. Ashok. The story exposes the poor-rich divide that surrounds India in the backdrop of economic prosperity, in the wake of the IT revolution. The novel shocked and entertained in equal measure.

Written in the epistolary form, the novel is a seven-part letter to the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao, from Balram alias Ashok Sharma, a self-styled thinking Man / and an entrepreneur. Balram, the killer, metamorphoses into his master's replica after his heinous crime. By crime and cunning, Balram rules his entrepreneurial world. (43)

This novel recounts how deception and treachery can flourish in the relationship between two individuals. The volatile condition of inter-personal relationship is dramatically brought to the fore. Despite Mr. Ashok's sympathetic attitude to his servant Balram, Balram continues to demonstrate typical Indian attitude and ethos. Thus it has to be praised that Sebastian has paid sufficient attention to the pattern along which basic human feelings can be handled.

Ekta Rai has given credit to Adiga's power to represent corruption and servitude. No matter how advanced and modernized India might be, it is still prone to relapsing into the mould of corruption, abject humility, servitude and a kind of lassitude at national level. Hence, it can be argued that the dark realities of the present day India are foregrounded in the novel. Instead of depicting the bright sides of India, the novelist has brought into light some of the growing perversions and decadence which modern India has been facing. Regarding to Adiga's portrayal of corruption and servitude, Ekta Rai has delivered the following remarks:

The novel studies a strong contrast between India's rise as a modern global economy and the lead character, Balram and the opening lines of the novel establish this fact. Being an Indian, Adiga has based his novel on the country as it actually is under the covers of India Shining. In fact the book makes us question the very phrase. The novel is in the form of a series of letters written by its protagonist, who calls himself the white tiger, to the Chinese premiere, Wen Jiabao. His letters contain an unflattering portrait of India as a society raked by corruption and servitude, as well as his views on caste system and political corruption. (15)

Ekta Rai is highly satirical of the form and the content of the novel. He is of the view that there is no organic connection between the form and the content of the novel. Content of the novel is not organically filtered. The use of epistolary method has weakened the core thematic content and the structural design of the novel. The language is full of satiric overtones and high sarcasm. The novel manages to put forth some of the serious issues in apparently lighter mode. One can also trace irony and mockery in the tone of language. Terms like Darkness, describing the rural villages, and Light for the city life are significant in putting forth the nature and condition of the two places.

Radha S. Hedge is the critic of many popular critics of many Indian novels written by different novelists in different periods of time. She says that Adiga has reproduced economic miracle and the voice of minority in *The White Tiger*. Her sarcastic view is manifest in the following citation:

In his book, Adiga not only peels back the gloss of the economic miracle to expose the rot beneath, he instructs us in the means by

which a small minority of the population is able to subjugate the majority. A *white tiger* is the rarest creature in the jungle, only coming along once in every generation. When Balram Halwai was still able to attend the excuse for a school in his village, he was singled out by a school inspector as being the white tiger of his contemporaries for being able to read and write when nobody else could. The inspector promised that Balram would be given a scholarship to attend a proper school so he could fulfill his potential. Unfortunately, fate had other plans. His family were forced to pull him out of school to help pay off their debt to their landlord. (32)

Radha S. Hedge is interested in Adiga's art of character portrayal. She rejoins that the story primarily has two main characters – the protagonist who writes the letter and the Chinese Premiere to whom its addressed and who does not appear anywhere apart from his name. Other characters keep surfacing as the story progresses. The characters in the story, especially the protagonist are extremely real and believable characters. There is nothing grand or heroic about them but pure reality. The characters employed by Adiga lack heroic proportion. The absence of heroic proportion in the art of character portrayal is the fundamental and identifying cachet of Arvinda Adiga.

Amritjeet Shingh has been the celebrated critic. He is reasonably critical of the so-called claim of India that it is world's greatest practioner of democracy. According to Shingh, the veneer of so-called political pretention of India is sharply called into question by Adiga in *The White Tiger*. Amritjeet Singh's extends his take on Adiga's approach and attitude to *The White Tiger* as follows:

The picture Aravinda Adiga paints of India in *The White Tiger* is of a nearly feudal society disguised as a democracy. If even a tenth of what

Balram describes as normal operating business is promising and there is no reason to believe otherwise, then India's economic miracle is as much a lie as China's. The country might have gained its independence from the British at the end of the 1940's, but the majority of people in India are still trapped in servitude. In the end, what makes the events in the book so believable is the character of Balram. He is the perfect servant. He worries whether his master is eating enough, takes pride in him when he behaves honorably, and is disappointed with him when he is weak. For all his protestations about the system, he is still as much a part of it as anybody else, and it takes an enormous amount of strength and luck for him to live up to his name of white tiger. He's not some reformer advocating change (64)

Balram recounts how a servant of one of the landlords in his home village did something wrong. The landlord had his entire family killed in retaliation. Balram says it would take a unique individual, a White Tiger even. In *The White Tiger* it is obviously clear that Balram suffer humiliation after humiliation and is expected to take it. His employer's wife gets drunk one night and forces Balram to let her drive and she kills a child. They make him sign a confession saying he was driving just in case the police decide to press charges. It's taken as matter of course that, as their servant, he would only be too glad to go to jail for them.

Lionel Richie has looked at the autobiographical aspect of this novel. Adiga's own personal experience has taken precedence over the literary and imaginative representation. The autobiographical elements are presented in the colorful mediums like epistolary representation. He opines his views in the following way:

The White Tiger brings into light the hidden potentiality of every man to emerge from darkness to light. Despite the rigors of poverty, illiteracy and superstition Balram Halawai manages to overcome those forces which hinder the progressive steps of his life. The author's experiences during adulthood and childhood have found manifestation –in this novel. The capacity to flourish by hook or crook is dramatized nicely in this novel. (36)

Lionel Richie is of the opinion that certain elements of the author's impressions and experiences are manifest in this novel. This point plays an important role in interpreting the text. Exploring the major autobiographical elements and joining these elements so as to trace the pattern serves the interpretive challenges and tasks.

Nirmal Sayiram is the popular critic of Arvinda Adiga. He has recognized the power of the author to capture the minority voice and portray these voices in a vivid and dramatic way. Deprived and dispossessed minority life is simply captured by the novelist. He expresses his opinions as follows:

The White Tiger by Arvinda Adiga has become a well known novel for its lucid depiction of the miseries of the rural Indians in Darkness. The presence of many hamlets in India seems to stultify the advantages of various serious plans since our independence lack of basic amenities in a village makes even a peace-loving person seething with frustration which may lead to resort violence as the Hobson's choice. (10)

Sayiram throws light on the excruciating discomfort faced by the villagers in the form of poor basic facilities and the cruel inhuman treatment on the villagers by the landlords. He has gone to an extreme extent in analyzing the detrimental impact of the lingering vestiges of feudalism on the growing democratic dispensation.

As a result of reading the article or the primary source, M.Q Khan has looked at this novel from different context. Khan goes on to establish a kind of relationship between feudalism and the flourishing principle of democracy. His perspective and perception runs as follows:

While unfolding his life of adventure and struggle, he is mainly concerned with painting a realistic picture of his village, his people, the feudal zamindars of India and particularly all those entrepreneurs to the great heights of business magnets. But it is the graphic picture of the country and the portrayal of a school teacher who is thus painted by the narrator. (13)

M.Q. Khan has traced the reflection of the existing realism. Different aspects of the socio-cultural life of peasant are reflected. According to Khan, the brand of realism pursued by Adiga is ambiguous and exotic beyond the ken of readers' perceptivity. Two different aspect of reality are brought to the forefront of representation.

Ana Cristina Mendes is the theorist of neo-orientalism. She has seen the vast possibility of grounding the analysis of the contemporary discourses in relation to the context of Neo-Orientalism. She analyzes the novel from the perspective of orientalism. She runs her view in the following way.

The White Tiger uncovers a dark India into the global literary market place at a time of a perceived shift in neo-orientalist representational practices and their western reception. But the orientalist convention is countered by the projection of new India filled with the technological exuberance. (12)

Ana Cristina has seen the encroachment of orientalist mentality in the artistic practice of representing new India. She sought to establish the connection between neo-

orientalism and the shifting glimpses of India. Orientalist practice is used and rejected at the same time.

Subodh Mitra throws spotlight upon the intentional complexities of the author Adiga. Regarding to the formalistic complexities of the author, he makes the following critical claim:

Adiga is unique in raising the current voices of many troubled and tormented people of the present day India. He is unwilling to use his creative art to dramatize the socio-cultural change. His complex poetics displays the cultural rigidity and parochialism of India. If he has forgotten realism associated with the progress of India, he has done justice to the hyperrealism of the contemporary India. (14)

Subodh Mitra, perhaps, wants to say that Adiga is a writer who is more obsessed with extreme problematic than the politics of progression. Any way his poetics has its own category suitable to the internal politics of the text.

M. N. Shrinivas has tried to approach this text from a somewhat new angle. He has managed to capture the projection and possibility of social reformation. The following citation dramatizes his straightforward view as to Adiga's authorial responsibility to the society:

Adiga raises the problems but he does not provide the best alternative Solution. Without showing the solution and the creative possibility of transformation, how can a writer hope to implant awareness in readers about the mushrooming and mounting troubles? The position of the author Adiga in the community of reader is questionable. (41)

Authorial limitations and restrictions are enumerated by M N Shrinivas. Despite the limitations, Adiga enjoys the literary privileges and prerogative.

Although different Critics have given their view in different ways, none of them have noticed the projection of the orientalist stereotypes in *The White Tiger*. Hence the present researcher aims at exploring the embedded orientalist ethos although the novelist is an Indian writer. By using the perspective of neo-orientalism and Edward Said's ideas from his famous book *Orientalism*, the researcher go ahead in the present research work. In chapter one the researcher introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis and supports the point with pertinent literature review. In the second chapter, the researcher elaborates the methodology of orientalism. Said's notion of how orientalist stereotypes exist even in the contemporary discourses can be of utmost importance. In chapter third, the researcher analyzes the text thoroughly. In the last chapter, concrete findings of the research will be mentioned precisely.

II. Neo-orientalism: A Survey

The researcher makes use of the tool of neo-orientalism which is the modified form of old orientalist sense. In the present day discourses plenty of old orientalist stereotypes have come in the new forms. It is difficult to identify those renewed forms of orientalist mentality in the contemporary discourses. The emerging neo-orientalist mentality is nothing other than the resurgence of the old orientalism. The world seems to have become much more interdependent. Political interrelations between the West and Islam have changed dramatically. Consequently this dualism has been influenced by escalating waves of globalization. This dualism is redistributed and reshaped in a different form.

To critically appraise this dualism in this new era, three prominent contemporary neo-orientalists, Bernard Lewis, John Esposito and Gilles Kepel, have been selected. Different aspects of their perspectives, their methodologies, and their views on neo-orientalism are to be taken into consideration. Their political propositions and Islamic belief and law in their vision are closely compared and critically examined. These three scholars are used to describe parts of the fabric of what the researcher calls neo –Orientalism. They are exemplars suggesting the existence of a larger whole. In addition to methods used by Said and to avoid his shortcomings, this research is informed by a Popperian methodology, relying on his theory of the growth of knowledge, his situational analysis and his views on framework and ideology. If the west and east dualism is considered as a spectrum of views on the east, Lewis is the most dualist, perfectly following all principles of dualism, Esposito is the least, and Kepel is in between. Moreover, some promising changes in neo Orientalism as well as some additional dualistic tendencies that can define neo Orientalism are found in this new era.

To portray a better future for our interdependent world, some new approaches to identity, global ethics and global civil society are suggested. Eradicating the roots of Orientalism and Occidentalism alike and accepting, protecting and even promoting diversity are first steps towards countering devastating threats that endanger humankind as a whole.

Thus the researcher talks about orientalism in detail. Then the concept of neo-orientalism will be dwelt upon keeping in mind the nature of the shifting dynamics of orientalism and its impact in intellectual scenario. Commenting upon the timeless significance of Said's stand upon orientalism, Sheldon Pllock puts forward the following viewpoint:

Orientalism is a discourse prepared by the western researchers about the orient. Edward Said's book *Orientalism* sets a new trend to explore the hidden politics which lurks behind every subtext of western representation of the east in general and the orient in particular. It significantly challenged the magnificent corpus of the Orientalist literature and showed that what was thought to be a genuine branch of knowledge has been in many ways some grand narratives fabricated in favor of Western political dominance. (54)

Hundreds of book reviews, academic papers, lectures, roundtables, conferences, all for or against the thesis suggested by *Orientalism*, abundantly illustrate the importance of its message. In addition to its theoretical significance, the published work was quite timely. As Abdel Malek notes, in the twentieth century specialists and the public at large became aware of "the time lag, not only between Orientalist science and the material under study, but also between the methodologies and the

instruments of work in the human and social sciences and those of Orientalism” (73).

The tenets of humanism and orientalism coincide for the most part.

The researcher does not want to go further into profound changes that *Orientalism* takes to the Western knowledge of Islam. An examination of its impact on how the West views the rest would require another research. Additionally, some political and social factors have greatly influenced interrelations between the West and Islam. Gilles Kepel is another critic of neo-orientalist trend. He has brought into light the fact that neo-orientalist mentality is caused by plenty of freshly burgeoning events like globalization and the advent of the politics of unipolarization. He delivers the following view concerning to the budding neo-orientalist trend:

The then global events like the collapse of the Soviet Union and a threat vacuum for the West, the growing presence of Muslims with the full right of citizenship in the West, and the emergence of global mass media, diverse satellite channels and the internet have transform the intellectual reflection of the international relation. Likewise, some events of this new era have challenged the traditional Western perception of Islam. Some of these events are the *de facto* democratic participation, victories of Islamic political movements, the growing voices of Islamic modernism, the rise of a democratic government led by Hamas as well as the democratic political participation of Hezbollah. (149)

Kepel is of the opinion that orientalist mindset is the underlying structure of western thought which certainly influences the surface manifestation of systematic western philosophy and viewpoint. Apart from the major events of political importance, there are other events like the emergence of modern global terrorist networks in the name of

Islam and escalating Western publications on Islam with a huge diversity of attitudes that they reveal in Western scholarship. These events have become intertwined with huge changes brought by unfolding waves of globalization.

Although there are disagreements on how to define globalization, most contemporary social analyses show a consensus about some basic rudiments of the concept. Among them are de-territorialization and the growth of interconnectedness. Under the influence of these two important factors, territory no longer constitutes the whole of social space in which human activity takes places. Distant events and decisions impact to a growing degree on local life. Hence, what happens to others nowadays matters to us to an unprecedented extent? In response to the above dramatic changes two academic trends have emerged. First is an increasing tendency to think of Orientalism as an ideology which belonged to a period of history that is now behind us. Critics are now moving beyond Orientalism and are in fact in the post Orientalism era. Joobin Bekhrad is keenly interested in examining the reality which has freshly appeared in the contemporary political discourse. He discloses the following view about the shift in the direction of orientalism:

The emergence of a global communications system and the development of a form of global sociology have ended the history of social centered analyses. Equally the sharp contrast between Occident and Orient is hopelessly out of date. The second trend, however, holds that although many preconditions which are responsible for crystallization of the Orientalist discourse are no longer in place. It would be naive to think that the old patterns of human history and destiny which had shaped the West and Islam dualism were simply removed. They have been reconstituted, redeployed, redistributed in a

globalised framework and have shaped a new paradigm which can be called neo-Orientalism. Few scholars have attempted to show some features and characteristics of this new paradigm. (112)

Although according to traditional Orientalism the state was stronger than society, the 1980s witnessed a dramatic change in Western analyses. Islam was incompatible with democracy. They both tried to essentialize otherness – and dualism – in one way or another. It is long past time for serious scholars to abandon the quest for the mysterious essence that prevent democratization in the Middle East and tend to the matter of fact itemization of the forces that promote or retard this process.

Dag Tuastad regards the new ways of representing the violence of Muslims and Arabs in Western media as new barbarism. He has discerned the presence of new barbarism in the structure of neo-orientalist thought. With audacity and ardor he dares to equate neo-orientalism with new barbarism. He elucidates upon this new barbarism as follows:

The new barbarism thesis implies explanations of political violence that omit political and economic interests and contexts when describing violence, and presents violence as a result of traits embedded in local cultures. New barbarism has intertwined with neo-Orientalist imaginaries that highlight a deep cultural dualism between Islam and the West. (42)

These waves of new barbarism and neo-Orientalism are to serve as hegemonic strategies when the production of enemy imaginaries contributes to legitimize continuous colonial economic or political projects, as can be witnessed in the Christina Hellmich borrow the term neo-Orientalism from Tuastad. He finds the most important particularity of neo-orientalism that it neglects local and specific aspects of

regional movements and instead attempts to portray a homogenous Islamist terrorist enemy.

Variations on Orientalism

In world politics perhaps the Soviet Union's collapse, which ended the paradigm of the Cold War was the most critical change after *Orientalism* was published. Said points to this and compares it with the first confrontation between Islam and Christianity. In the supposed intellectual vacuum created by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the search for a new foreign devil has come to rest, as it did at the beginning of the eighth century for European Christianity, on Islam, a religion whose proximity seemed immensely problematic to the West. According to Avadhesh Kuma Singh, the literal apex of this newly formulated and revitalized dualism between "the West and Islam was devised by Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* theory. Huntington unconditionally appreciates Said's criticism of Orientalism. He suggests a far more devastating version of dualism as a new paradigm for world politics" (96). Nevertheless, Said is against Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations, considering it as a clash of ignorance.

Edward Said's evaluation and critique of the set of beliefs known as Orientalism forms an important background for postcolonial studies. His work highlights the inaccuracies of a wide variety of assumptions as it questions various paradigms of thought which are accepted on individual, academic, and political levels. Said argues that Orientalism can be found in current Western depictions of Arab cultures and other forms of western representation of eastern culture and civilization. The depictions of the Arab as irrational, menacing, untrustworthy, anti-Western, dishonest and, most importantly, prototypical are pervasive in current discourses. These notions are trusted as foundations for both ideologies and policies developed by

the Occident. Said writes that “the hold these instruments have on the mind is increased by the institutions built around them. There is a support system of staggering power, considering the ephemerality of the myths that Orientalism propagates” (171). The system now culminates into the very institutions of the state. To write about the Arab Oriental world, therefore, is to write with the authority of a nation, and not with the affirmation of a strident ideology but with the unquestioning certainty of absolute truth backed by absolute force. One would find this kind of procedure less objectionable as political propaganda. This is the culmination of Orientalism as a dogma that not only degrades its subject matter but also blinds its practitioners.

Said calls into question “the underlying assumptions that form the foundation of Orientalist thinking. A rejection of Orientalism entails a rejection of biological generalizations, cultural constructions, and racial and religious prejudices” (191). It is a rejection of greed as a primary motivating factor in intellectual pursuit. It is an erasure of the line between 'the West' and the other. Said argues for the use of narrative rather than vision in interpreting the geographical landscape known as the Orient, meaning that a historian and a scholar would turn not to a panoramic view of half of the globe, but rather to a focused and complex type of history that allows space for the dynamic variety of human experience. Rejection of Orientalist thinking does not entail a denial of the differences between the West and the Orient, but rather an evaluation of such differences in a more critical and objective fashion. John Esposito is the noted critic of Neo-Orientalism. He has sought to describe the subtle connection between orientalism and fresh modification of orientalism. His view is depicted below:

The Orient cannot be studied in a non-Orientalist manner. Rather, the scholar is obliged to study more focused and smaller culturally consistent regions. The person who has until now been known as the Oriental must be given a voice. Scholarship from afar and second-hand representation must take a back seat to narrative and self-representation on the part of the Oriental. (54)

Esposito asserts that much western study of Islamic civilization was political intellectualism bent on self-affirmation rather than objective study. It is a method of discrimination, and a tool of imperialist domination. Said sets about dismantling the study of the orient in general with primary focus on the Islamic Near East. He argues that concepts such as the Orient, Islam, and the Arabs are too vast to be grouped together and presented as one coherent whole. It encompasses all there is to know about the subject. Said locates his view on the width and breadth of the subject. He dwells upon the inherent bias of conflicting cultures and more recently the role of the Orientalism in colonialism.

Said's research of western / occidental discourse is very thorough indeed. He does illustrate through repeated examples how misinformation sufficiently repeated can become accepted academic work. Said also presents an analysis of the causes and motives and theorizes about his findings. The researcher is particularly interested in Said's analysis of the strong ties that Orientalism has with power and colonialism. Said's analysis of the diverging development of the British and French practice based on the latter's limited success as a colonial power was very enjoyable and very well thought out. The orioentalism today is also very informative and as these were more familiar areas for Said his presentation of ideas and thoughts came across more clearly and the writing was far less tedious than the earlier parts of the book. Joseph

Straub is in agreement with Said's in-depth analysis of power in relation to discourse. His brief view on the power dynamics of orientalism as perceived by Said is listed below:

While Occidentalism does not exist as a field of study in a place like Egypt per se, Said fails to see that the west is viewed largely in terms of its wealth, promiscuous habits, hypocrisy and anti Islam. Similarly, he fails to see it as two way street, though with unequal power. It is however a very legitimate and serious study of a field of study that no doubt has a lot to answer for. The strength of Edward Said's *Orientalism* is its highlighting of the underlying assumptions of dominance and subjection in Orientalist scholarship. (211)

According to Joseph, Said correctly points out that the British, French and United States have relied on the reduction of the Orient to an academic study backed by a mythical image of its inhabitants and cultures as more primitive, passionate, mystical and illogical. Complementing this has been a presumption of Western superiority that allows diagnosis of social ills and prescription of Western remedies for these ills.

Said borrows from the best of thinkers like Vico and Foucault, offering a rigorous survey and evisceration of a disgusting, racist, lazy intellectual tradition. He makes an airtight case that academia has often been not only tacitly aligned with, but in many ways openly complicit with dehumanizing Imperialist ambitions. This is a brilliant statement about the inherently political, non-essentialist nature of intellectual traditions and development. The Orient signifies "a system of representations framed by political forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and Western empire. The Orient exists for the West" (*Culture and Imperialism* 97) and is constructed by and in relation to the West. It is a mirror image

of what is inferior and alien to the West. Orientalism is a manner of regularized writing, vision, and study, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases." It is the image of the Orient expressed as an entire system of thought and scholarship. The Oriental is the person represented by such thinking. The man is depicted as feminine, weak, yet strangely dangerous because poses a threat to white, Western women. The woman is both eager to be dominated and strikingly exotic. The Oriental is a single image, a sweeping generalization, a stereotype that crosses countless cultural and national boundaries. "Latent Orientalism is the unconscious, untouchable certainty about what the Orient is. Its basic content is static and unanimous. The Orient is seen as separate, eccentric, backward, silently different, sensual, and passive" (*Orientalism*, 213). It has a tendency towards despotism and away from progress. It displays feminine penetrability and supine malleability. Its progress and value are judged in terms of, and in comparison to, the West. Manifest Orientalism is what is spoken and acted upon. It includes information and changes in knowledge about the Orient as well as policy decisions founded in Orientalist thinking. It is the expression in words and actions of Latent Orientalism.

Dynamics of Orientalism

The first Orientalists were 19th century scholars who translated the writings of the Orient into English. The underlying principle that orientalism is that based on the assumption that a truly effective colonial conquest required knowledge of the conquered peoples. This idea of knowledge as power is present throughout Said's critique. By knowing the Orient, the West came to own it. The Orient became the studied, the seen, the observed, and the object. Orientalist scholars are the students, the seers, the observers, and the subject. The Orient was passive; the West was active.

One of the most significant constructions of Orientalist scholars is that of the Orient itself. What is considered the Orient is a vast region, one that spreads across a myriad of cultures and countries. It includes most of Asia as well as the Middle East. The depiction of this single Orient which can be studied as a cohesive whole is one of the most powerful accomplishments of Orientalist scholars. It essentializes an image of a prototypical Oriental--a biological inferior that is culturally backward, peculiar, and unchanging--to be depicted in dominating and sexual terms. The discourse and visual imagery of Orientalism is laced with notions of power and superiority. It is formulated initially to facilitate a colonizing mission on the part of the West. It has perpetuated through a wide variety of discourses and policies.

The language is critical to the construction. The feminine and weak Orient awaits the dominance of the West; it is a defenseless and unintelligent whole that exists for, and in terms of, its western counterpart. The importance of such a construction is that it creates a single subject matter where none existed. Since the notion of the Orient is created by the Orientalist, it exists solely for him or her. Its identity is defined by the scholar who gives it life.

Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions. It is not a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient. By the same token it is not representative and expressive of some nefarious western imperialist plot to hold down the oriental world. It is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts. It is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction but also of a whole series of interests. It is certain will or intention to understand and manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly

different world. It is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw.

Said says that with the start of European colonization the Europeans came in contact with the lesser developed countries of the east. They found their civilization and culture very exotic, and established the science of orientalism. Edward Said argues that the “Europeans divided the world into two parts; the east and the west or the occident and the orient or the civilized and the uncivilized. This was totally an artificial boundary” (298). It was laid on the basis of the concept of them and us or theirs and ours. The Europeans used orientalism to define themselves. Some particular attributes were associated with the orientals, and whatever the orientals weren't the occidentals were. The Europeans defined themselves as the superior race compared to the orientals; and they justified their colonization by this concept. They said that it was their duty towards the world to civilize the uncivilized world. The main problem, however, arose when the Europeans started generalizing the attributes they associated with orientals, and started portraying these artificial characteristics associated with orientals in their western world through their scientific reports, literary work, and other media sources. What happened was that it created a certain image about the orientals in the European mind and in doing that infused a bias in the European attitude towards the orientals. This prejudice was also found in the orientalist. Their scientific research and reports were under the influence of this. The generalized attributes associated with the orientals can be seen even today.

The orientals divided the world into two parts by using the concept of ours and theirs. An imaginary geographical line was drawn between what was ours and what was theirs. The orientals were regarded as uncivilized people. The westerners said that since they were the refined race, it was their duty to civilize these people and in

order to achieve their goal; they had to colonize and rule the orient. They said that the orient themselves were incapable of running their own government. Said furthermore clarifies the point as follows:

The Europeans also thought that they had the right to represent the orientals in the west all by themselves. In doing so, they shaped the orientals the way they perceived them or in other words they were orientalizing the orient. Various teams have been sent to the east where the orientals silently observed the orientals by living with them; and everything the orientals said and did was recorded irrespective of its context, and projected to the civilized world of the west. This resulted in the generalization. Whatever was seen by the orientals was associated with the oriental culture, no matter if it is the irrational action of an individual. (326)

The most important use of orientalism to the Europeans is that they defined themselves by defining the orientals. For example, qualities such as lazy, irrational, uncivilized, crudeness were related to the orientals, and automatically the Europeans became active, rational, civilized, sophisticated. Thus, in order to achieve this goal, it was very necessary for the orientalist to generalize the culture of the orient.

Another feature of orientalism is that the culture of the orientals is explained to the European audience by linking them to the western culture. For instance, Islam is made into Mohammadism because Mohammad was the founder of this religion and since religion of Christ is called Christianity. Thus Islam should be called Mohammadism. The point to be noted here is that no Muslim was aware of this terminology and this was a completely western created term, and to which the Muslims had no say at all.

Edward Said points the slight change in the attitude of the Europeans towards the orientals. The orientals were really publicized in the European world especially through their literary work. Bikram Sen complies with the Said's doctrine of orientalist mentality which has immortality since it can appear in the new form. Sen has brought into light the following remarks regarding to the immortal ethos of orientalism:

Oriental land and behavior is highly romanticized by the European poets and writers and then presented to the western world. The orientalist had made a stage strictly for the European viewers, and the orientals were presented to them with the color of the orientalist or other writer's perception. In fact, the orient lands were so highly romanticized that western literary writers found it necessary to offer pilgrimage to these exotic lands of pure sun light and clean oceans. The east was now perceived by the orientalist as a place of pure human culture with no necessary evil in the society. Actually, it was this purity of the orientals that made them inferior to the clever, witty, diplomatic, far-sighted European. (78)

Thus, it was their right to rule and study such an innocent race. The Europeans said that these people were too naive to deal with the cruel world, and that they needed the European fatherly role to assist them.

Shifting breadth of Orientalism

After World War I the centre of orientalism moved from Europe to USA. One important transformation that took place during this time was instances of relating it to philology and it was related to social science now. All the orientalist studied the orientals to assist their government to come up with policies for dealing with the orient countries. With the end of World War two, all the Europeans colonies were

lost. It was believed that there were no more Orientals and occidental, but this was surely not the case. Herman Tajfal illuminates how western bias provokes the following politics of understanding and knowledge:

Western prejudice towards eastern countries was still very explicit, and often they managed to generalize most of the eastern countries because of it. For example Arabs were often represented as cruel and violent people. Japanese were always associated with karate where as the Muslims were always considered to be terrorists. Thus, this goes on to show that even with increasing globalization and awareness, such bias was found in the people of the developed countries. (98)

Edward Said concludes his book by saying that he is not saying that the orientalist should not make generalization, or they should include the oriental perspective too, but creating a boundary at the first place is something which should not be done.

Orientalism is a style of thought based upon “ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and the Occident” (215). Thus a very large mass of writers, among who are poet, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, mind, destiny, and so on.

Edward Said launched a critique of Western scholarship on the Middle East that still reverberates through academia and government. By characterizing Middle Eastern cultures as incapable of adapting to modern life, the early Orientalists, in Said’s view, hid their colonial, and indeed racist, biases. In the process, he suggested, Orientalists fooled themselves—and Westerners generally—into believing that their studies were undertaken with total neutrality. Said particularly attacked Bernard

Lewis as “the contemporary exemplar of this entrenched view. In a series of exchanges, Said argued that such scholarly bias contributed to the failure of the West to recognize Palestinians as a distinct people” (123) or to value Middle Eastern nations except for their oil.

Orientalism is a creation of the Western imagination. It is a kind of Western projection onto and will to govern over the Orient. The vision cast up by Orientalists gives authority to attitudes and actions they willingly or unwittingly supported. Following Foucault, Said saw the Orientalists of each era attributing the same features to Arabs—racial inferiority, Islamic fanaticism, unbridled sexuality, craven acquiescence to power—which yielded a caricatured East from which the West has never shaken free. Asserting that Orientalism has historically been one department of liberal humanism, he argued more broadly that the general liberal consensus that true knowledge is fundamentally non-political obscures the highly political circumstances obtaining when knowledge is produced.

Western society developed, over the course of the nineteenth century, a series of discourses - academic, literary, political, etc. - on the Orient and the Arab world. Since the same regulating norms, perspectives, and ideological biases dominated all these narratives, they came to constitute what Said calls a system of representation. It is to this closely knit web of thought, scholarship and cultural production, and its empowering institutions, that the term Orientalism refers.

Western pursuit of learning, vision and knowledge about the Orient is not motivated by a disinterested search for truth, but by a desire to serve Western imperialism and dominance. The Oriental is portrayed as barbaric, devoted to despotism and submission, and lacking high culture and civilization. Orient is, in other words, a suitable object upon which the Western conqueror may impose his

rule, his political order and his way of life. As a result, the Arab and the Muslim have become caught in a web of racial, cultural and generally dehumanizing stereotypes.

The great virtue of Said's method is that it allows us to look behind the mirror of representation and to perceive the abstract categories and the totalizing tendencies of the discourses that envelope the world of human.

Said's *Orientalism* focuses mainly on eighteenth and nineteenth French and English scholarly studies of Middle Eastern Arabic culture. Gabriel Marrancia makes the following statement about Said's contention:

His contention is that studies exist mainly in order to serve the interest of political domination and control. For nearly two decades, the study of such writers is almost completely dominated by a search for the orientalist cultural categories. The resulting scholarship has contributed enormously to our understanding not only of particular literary works but also of the relationship between literary form and social hierarchy and power. Collected in *Culture and Imperialism*, Said's own critical essays provide some of our finest models of the judicious and balanced application of his theory to literary works. (76)

Orientalism in particular has been harshly attacked by Orientalists like Bernard Lewis. Said is accused of distorting the history of European-Arabic relations. He is alleged with ignoring key scholars in the field. The claim by Said that Islamic scholars like Lewis find most offensive is that far from constituting a disinterested search for scholarly knowledge and understanding, oriental studies actually exist mainly to serve the interest of political power. It expands European knowledge of the Orient in order to exert political and cultural control over it.

In his masterpiece, *Orientalism*, Said deeply and comprehensively researched the historical construction of the West and Islam dualism in Western literature on Islam. *Orientalism* traces the various phases of relationship of the West and Islam, from the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, through the colonial period and the rise of modern Orientalist scholarship in Britain and France during the nineteenth century. It continues up to the end of European imperial hegemony in the Orient after World War II and then the emergence of American dominance. The term Orientalism, like Latinism and Hellenism, refers to the discipline which now can be equated with Middle Eastern studies.

The Orient means the Arab world or generally the Middle East. It did not include India, China or the Far East. In Said's view, the discipline of Orientalism is but a crystallization of the West and Islam dualism in Western scholarship. The main thesis of Said in *Orientalism* is not to suggest that there is such a thing as a real or true Orient; nor is it to make an assertion about the necessary privilege of an insider perspective over an outsider one. On the contrary, he argues that the Orient is itself a constituted entity. He further emphasizes the fact that he never suggests a dualist approach not because it is against Islam, but because this approach to the world is a flawed ideology in itself. He pays especial attention to the arbitrary nature of the big notions of Orient, Islam and the West. He believes that such concepts have no ontological stability; each is made up of human effort, partly affirmation, partly identification of the other to mobilize and organize collective passion. He then elaborates how these terms were manipulated for creating a hostile discourse which is responsible for the current climate of global distrust. So long as there is a well-organized sense that people over there are not like us and don't appreciate our values, he argues, there will be global distrust and conflict.

Foucault's influence over his analyses is obvious throughout the book.

Discourse, culture and the network of power make major themes in *Orientalism*. Said, however, goes farther than Foucault to investigate who gains the power and how. He highlights the role of power relations between West and East. He suggests that the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony. He adds that the reality is much more problematic. No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the necessities of life, from national identity, or from the fact that he is consciously or unconsciously involved with a class, a set of beliefs, and a social position. His contention is that Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness.

III. Projection of Orientalist Ethos in Arvinda Adiga's *The White Tiger*

Arvinda Adiga's novel *The White Tiger* reproduces the modern India in all of its forms and manifestations. The contemporary India has achieved many things in its attempts to relate itself to several progressive and transformative movements of far reaching consequences. There are some sectors and segments of the contemporary India which make Indian proud and pleased. In the domain of technology transfer, India has achieved remarkable level of expertise. The invention of technology takes time but the transfer of technology is quick and fruitful. Its traditional culture is influenced and affected increasingly by globalization and social modernization. Many reforms of huge proportion are underway. In the field of social justice and equality, a great breakthrough is achieved. In this way India's appropriation and importation of western technology and cultural liberalization has invited considerable reform, progress and transformation. But the novel *The White Tiger* by Adiga is not devoted to celebrating the rosy side of the contemporary India. On the contrary, this novel brings into light the seamy side of India in the contemporary era. Though India is penetrated and invaded by the twilight of modernity, grace of postmodernity, it has still retained the same stereotypical characteristics which the eighteenth and nineteenth century orientalist had discussed extensively in several discourses of orientalism.

Tradition and the regressive forces of cultural tradition have been giving way to the effects of events and movements like globalization, late capitalism, economic liberalization and others. But at the same time the rigorous and deep-rooted forces of tradition have continued to pose threat to the onrush of modernity, globalization, feminism and technology transfer. In the novel *The White Tiger*, people are widely suspicious of the comforts and benefits ranging from modernity and globalization.

The widening gap between the rich and the poor, which is the conclusion of orientalist representations, is still pervasive in the contemporary India. In the village of Bihar, a boy named Balram Halwai lives. He is born and brought up in the poor family. He wants to overcome the horror and shame brought by poverty. But he does not see the chance. He is forced to quit going to the school.

Circumstances force him to work in the house of a landlord. The social trend of Dowry Pratha puts pressures on him. To give the dowry to his cousin's sister, Balram mortgages his labor in the house of a wealthy landlord. Even in the contemporary India, there is still a large group of people who are striving for freedom from the monstrous poverty. No matter how developed the country might be, poverty continues to become the hallmark of India. In era dominated by colonialist occupation of India through the production of orientalist discourse poverty was the distinguishing feature. Now in the last first decade of the twenty first century, poverty continues to persist as the exclusive feature of India. The following lines taken from *The White Tiger* depict the gruesome poverty which is on the rise despite the country's efforts to alleviate and manage it:

The dreams of the rich, and the dreams of the poor- they never overlap, do they? See, the poor dream all their lives of getting enough to eat and looking like the rich. And what do the rich dream of? Losing weight and looking like the poor. Every evening, the compound around Buckingham Towers B Block becomes an exercise ground. Plump, paunchy men and even plumber, paunchier women, with big circles of sweet below their arms, are doing their evening walking. The rich tend to get fat in Delhi. So they walk to lose weight. In the outdoors- by a river, inside a park is around a forest. (225)

Even in the city Delhi, the gap between the rich and the poor is on the dramatic rise. Poverty is described vividly in this above cited paragraph. Even in the metropolitan area where the state observes the scenario and deals with the problems, the gap between the poor and the rich continues to shake the pretensions of the contemporary India. Massive poverty and frustrations of those who belong to the category of poverty are prominently discussed in this above-cited part. The same world witnesses two types of people- one who walk miles to digest food the other is those who walk for miles to get food. This disparity between the rich and the poor is depicted empathetically in this novel. How different is the contemporary India if poverty has still remained its distinguishing feature.

Balaram is bound to sell his labor right from his childhood. He has the willingness to go to school and learn like other kids. But the circumstances compel him to move to different direction. In this regard nothing can be said. In the age of the technological miracle and the unbelievable comforts, those Indian workers belonging to the category of poverty are nagged and hassled by the assault of mosquito. The following lines describe the living and sleeping condition of workers is no less than that of a hellhole:

At night I lay in my mosquito net, the light bulb on in my room and watched the dark roaches crawling on top of the net, their antennae quivering and trembling, like bits of my own nerves; and I lay in bed, too agitated even to reach out and crush them. A cockroach flew down and landed right above my head. You should have asked them for money when they made you sign that thing. Enough money to sleep with twenty white-skinned girls, It flew away. Another landed on the same spot. (30)

Mosquito and cockroach infest the ways of lives lived by a part of Indians. There are some categories of people who can afford to use all the facilities created by the advanced technology. Each and every technological facilities and comforts are available to some people whereas others are pressurized to live with cockroach and mosquito. The level of sanitation mentioned in this novel is no less than the sanitation discussed by the famous orientalist of the last two centuries. In this regard it can be contended that orientalist stereotypes and ethos have occurred in this novel. Whether the author has intentionally brought the oriental stereotypes regarding Indians or not, it is not mentioned. But it can be contended cogently that in the matter of sanitations and cleanliness, Indians are still carrying the legacy of orientalist stereotypes and prejudices.

In several discourses of orientalism orient is depicted as an enfeebled geography virtually incapable of self-governance. Of course the political and administrative power of orient is misrepresented in the discourse of orientalism, but there is certain trace of truth in this statement. The untested orientalist assumption is that the orient is not capable of making equality and justice oriented politics. The establishment of democratic governance degenerates into anarchy and turmoil. Of course, it appears that democratic system of governance is not suitable to the soil of the Indian subcontinent in general. The fragile and decadent structure of political bodies and apparatuses indicate that the contemporary India is somewhat analogous to the weakened sense of political instability detected by the orientalist. The following extract taken from the text illustrates the core point:

The minister wants more. It is election time. Every time there are elections, we hand out cash. Usually to both sides, but this time the government is going to win for sure. The opposition is in total mess.

So we just have to pay off the government, which is good for us. I will come with you the first time, but it is a lot of money, and you may have to go a second and third time too. And then there are a couple of bureaucrats we have to grease. Get it? It seems like this is all I get to do in Delhi. Take money out of banks and bribe people. Is this what I came back to India? (240)

The politics practiced in the contemporary India is the politics of conspiracy not as a service to the country and its people. It is simply taken as the tool of deception and exclusion. The notion of politics done in the contemporary India is not motivated by the genuine virtues like service to country and people. It has become the cynical game. Once a politician reaches the position of power, he would adhere to it like a lich. Even if he is sure to lose the election, he becomes dedicated to win the election by fair means or foul. Hence, it becomes essential for leaders to cling to the position of power through propaganda, manipulation and other unfair democratic means. In the representation of the shifting nature of the politics of the contemporary India, the Adiga has incorporated the orientalist pride and prejudice. In this regard it can surely be contended that there are plenty of orientalist stereotypes and ethos.

‘Inscrutable’ and ‘bizarre’ are the adjectives frequently exploited by the orientalists in their discourses of orientalism. The fact that India is bizarre and free-floating is deeply entrenched in the western psyche. Bucolic, bizarre, free-floating and inscrutable are some to the handy adjectives which are frequently used by orientalists of the last two century. The same and similar kinds of stereotypes are used by Adiga in *The White Tiger*. The following paragraph gives the glimpse of the bizarreness of the contemporary India:

Now, if you visit any train station in India, you will see, as you stand waiting for your train, a row of bizarre-looking machines with red light bulbs, kaleidoscopic wheels, and whirling yellow circles. These are your fortune-and-weight-for-one-rupee machines that stand on every rail platform in the country. They work like this. You put your bags down to the side. You stand on them. Then you insert a one-rupee coin into the slot. The machine comes to life; levers start to move inside, things go clankety-clank, and the lights flash like crazy. Then there is a loud noise, and a small stiff chit of cardboard colored either green or yellow will pop out of the machine. The lights and noise calm down.

(248)

Balram Halwai observes the scenario of the capital Delhi. There are hundreds of thousands of migrants like Balraram Halwai from different villages of India. They have gone to Delhi in search of jobs. In villages poor people are affected by several things like caste contamination, superstition, rigid customs and other dehumanizing practices. That is why the vulnerable groups of the contemporary India are still as irrational and suspicious as they were in prior to the beginning of modernization of India. Most of the phenomena and happening around the metropolitan locations are mysterious and puzzling. No matter how modernized and technologically well equipped, most of the segments of the contemporary India are still mysterious and bizarre. A great deal of exoticism exists in the transforming conditions of India. The stock of adjectives like mysterious, puzzling, bizarre, exotic is used in the actual and authentic description of India in its evolving phase.

In the contemporary India, two different types can be found. One is the technologically well-equipped modern India which has exerted considerable say in the

international arena. This first type shows a glimpse of new India. Other type is the India in its backward condition. The second type is the India described by orientalist of the eighteenth century. In this novel, what Balram Halwai sees is the traditional India marked by its rigorous tradition, superstitions and corrupt social trends. The orientalist had lamented that India lacks the administrative and managerial skill. In the contemporary context, the greatest difficulty of India is the difficulty of bridging the gap between the old India, which is analogous to the orientalized image and the modern India which is technologically well-equipped and advanced. The following extract lists the observations and impressions of Balram, a subaltern migrant of Bihar in New Delhi:

Now, G. B. Road is in Old Delhi, about which I should say something. Remember, Mr. Premier that Delhi is the capital of not one but two countries—two India. The Light and the Darkness both flow in to Delhi. Guragaon, where Mr. Ashok lived, is the bright, modern end of the city, and this place, Old Delhi, is the other end. Full of things that the modern world forgot all about—rickshaws, old stone buildings, and Muslims, on a Sunday, though, there is something more: if you keep pushing through the crowd that is always there, go past the men cleaning the other men's ears by poking rusty metal rods into them, past the men selling small fish trapped in green bottles full of brined.

(252)

Balram Halwai is the observer who has recorded his impressions and observations authentically. He is a poor migrant whose struggle in life is limited in earning daily breads. He does not know what orientalist bias is or not. What he knows is that the amorphous and chaotic city makes him sluggish. He is already fed up with the heart-

rending poverty of Bihar. He comes to New Delhi to seek a job. A highly enthusiastic and vivacious boy, he is bent of going to any extent in an attempt to climb the social ladder. He is already convinced that it is difficult to challenge the social hierarchy and occupy the prominent position in the society. He is ready to take any fair means or foul to win the game of success in life. What he finds in Delhi brings extreme desolation in his life. Rational management and institutional administration of growing social troubles are still far from the collective expectations of people. Even in the people frustrated by the chronic failures and weakening position, the rational commitment is still absent. If the modern part of India too lacks the essential modernist and pragmatic insight, what would be the condition of the backward part of India which is far removed from the grace of modernity and technological expansion?

Halwai comes from Laxmangarh, a poor and backward village of Bihar. He witnesses massive poverty, child labor, dowry system, and other degrading curses of dilapidated society. To escape from the monstrous poverty and backwardness of Laxmangarh he comes to Delhi. But in Delhi, he happens to find places worst than Laxmangarh. What is backward and what is modernized in India is not clearly distinguishable. What shocks Balram Halwai is that no matter where he goes he is compelled to see the heart-rending example of monstrous poverty and backwardness which suffocated. Thousands of youths and other people with ambitious plan are handicapped with deep-rooted poverty. Once a hundred rupee note is seen flying down into the river. The children watched with open mouths, and then ran to catch the note before it floated away. One child caught it, and then the other began hitting him, and they began to tumble about in the black water as they fought. This scene portrays vicious and dreadful consequences of poverty. The following lines help to visualize the condition of psyche affected by the massive and unavoidable poverty:

These people were building homes for the rich, but they lived in tents covered with blue tarpaulin sheets, and partitioned into lanes by lines of sewage. It was even worse than Laxmangarh. I picked my way around the broken glass, wire, and shattered tube lights. The stench of faeces was replaced by the stronger stench of industrial sewage. The slum ended in an open sewer- a small river of black water went sluggishly past me, bubbles sparkling in it and little circles spreading on its surface. Two children were splashing about in the black water.

(260)

The concept of sanitation in the orient is highly ridiculed in several discourses of orientalism. Many orientalist lament that the oriental people do not have the concept of sanitation. In the case of maintaining sanitation, the Indians are highly sluggish and passive. The concept of sanitation should be taught to them. This sort of politically motivated statement about the orient and the oriental people has undergone change. Thus it does not bear relevance and implication now. But in this text such orientalist allegations have made resurgence. In the above-cited extract author Adiga clearly mentions that stench of faeces is subdued by the stench of industrial sewage. The skill of management of the social problems and by-products is still absent in those who feel proud of being the inhabitants of city. It is miserable to find that after hundreds of years of orientalist charges and accusations, the east, typically India has remained the same. In this regard it can be surely said that orientalist ethos is clearly manifest in Adiga's representation of the contemporary India.

Once, Balram and Dharma go to sip tea in tea shop. They are surprised to see the way tea shop is washed and cleansed. Things are in the scattered condition. The tea shop is infested by mice which scamper away as the tea shop owner opens the

door. The degrading and dwindling aspects of sanitations are clearly revealed in the following paragraph cited from the novel:

It was the time of the day when the tea shop got cleaned. One of the human spiders dropped a wet rag on the floor and started to crawl with it, pushing a growing wavelet of stinking ink-black water ahead of him. Even the mice scampered out of the shop. The customers sitting at the tables were not spared- the black puddle splashed them as it passed. Bits of beedis, shiny plastic wrappers, punched bus tickets, snippets of onion, sprigs of fresh coriander floated on the black water; the reflection of a naked electric bulb shone out of the scum like a yellow gemstone. (265)

The above-cited extract contains plenty of orientalist images and stereotypes. Almost all the images used in this paragraph are concerned with the issue of sanitation. Indians talk a lot about sanitation. But their practices in sanitation are highly ironical. The image ink-black water is used to show how the tea shop owner washed the shop and other essential things. The tea shop is so dirty that mice constantly infest it. Mice infesting the tea shop are a good example of how the condition of sanitation is dwindling down. Within the tea shop there is the black water puddle. Butts of cigarettes, beedis snippets of onions and other dirt are scattered. A tea shop filled with such dirt and bits of kitchen items can be harmful to the people. Nobody cares for the weak hygienic conditions. Consumers have the right to survey the things they want to buy. Here nobody does this. The worst thing Balram Halwai sees is the lowest concern for sanitation and hygienic conditions of consumers.

In the dramatic moments of public gathering and social interactions, instead of maintaining laws and rules strictly, these rules and regulations are almost suspended.

Roads are observed and described by Adiga through the eye of Balram Halwai. Halwai observes the road of Delhi and feels staggered by the traffic jams. He feels lost and confined in the labyrinth of traffic jams. Nobody has the sensitivity and awareness that his or her rush and rashness can disturb others. The notion of individual liberty and freedom is least developed in India. This is the observation of orientalist of the last few centuries. But even in the early decades of the twenty first century, the suspension of rules, traffic jams, anarchy at the daily routines and patterns are described in the same spirit and quantity. The lack of the management of daily lives is one indication of how uncoordinated and fragmented modernist life of contemporary India is. This kind of observation is manifested in the following lines cited from the text:

I tell you, you could have heard the grinding of my teeth just then. I thought I was making plans for him? He had been making plans for me! The rich are always one step ahead of us- are not they? Well, not this time. For every step he would take, I would take two. Outside on the road, a street side vendor was sitting next to a pyramid of motorbike helmets that were wrapped in plastic and looked like a pile of several heads. Just when we were about to reach the gardens, we saw that the road was blocked on all sides: a line of trucks had gathered in front of us, full of men who were shouting. (268)

This extract gives the metonymic glimpse of life which is not bounded by laws of daily life. Rules and disciplines are often violated and distorted. Respect for the rules and disciplines of daily schedule are just a fantasy. Daily life is affected by the wild spree and the violent rush for the immediate fulfillment of duties and professional demands. Irrational and impulsive temperaments of the Indians are the real obstacles on India's endeavor towards the accomplishment of the highest level of social

progress. Social order and principle of daily life should be respected and obeyed. Else human beings would have to face a great deal of troubles and setbacks. Temperamental spree and irrational passions are the distinguishing characteristics of Indians. This trait, which was once surveyed and disclosed by the orientalist, is still uppermost in the structure of Indian manners and manifestations.

The politics of India in its current phase is hardly guided by the progressive sense of doing service to the country. It has not become the way to carving the path of national progress and social transformation. On the contrary, it has become the tool to grab power. Moreover, it has become the cynical game. There are different political groups and parties who chant different slogans and programs. But the country remains the same. The same poverty, the same unemployment and the same degree of social inequality exist in the same area at the same proportion. Politics is limited in politics only. It hardly brings progressive effects in the lives of people affected by the actual challenges of life. The politics done in the actual platform is not the politics of action. Who takes the trouble of doing politics taking into consideration the fundamental demands and requirements of the people? Politics pursued and practiced in the contemporary world of the Indian subcontinent is the politics of consolation, false hope and treachery. What people get by keeping their faith in politics is none other than deception and exploitation. People are just made rungs by climbing which leaders get the position of power. The following lines expose these sorts of dark political realities:

According to the radio, the ruling party had been hampered at the polls. A new set of parties had come to power. The Great Socialist's party was one of them. He had taken the votes of a big part of the darkness. As we drove back Guragaon, we saw hordes of his supporters pouring in from the Darkness. They drove where they

wanted, did what they wanted, whistled at any woman they felt like whistling at. Delhi had been invaded. The election shows that the poor will not be ignored. The darkness will not be silent. There is no water in our taps and what do you people in Delhi gave us? You give us mobile phones. Can a man drink a phone when he is thirsty? Women walk for miles every morning to find a bucket of clean water. (268)

This extract throws spotlight upon the dwindling and eroding faith in politics. People have fervent belief in the transformative power of politics they are confident that political free will and commitment have the potentiality to address the actual challenges faced by people in the society. When people are naïve about the crooked business of the politicians, they are unduly enthusiastic about it. But they are now painfully awake to the crooked and treacherous practices of the politicians. People become awake to the terrifying gap between the political preaching and practices. Once people became increasingly aware of the political game of deception and treachery, they turn their back to it. The sort of optimism and excitement brought by the political sense of independence subsided. Search for social justice and self respect on the part of the people are constantly thwarted by the political gimmicks and other forms of tricks of trades. The orientalist conception of the politics in the Indian subcontinent is that politics here would never be the politics of service and commitment to the nation and the citizens in it. The same kind of political conception is obviously clear in the above citation.

Adiga's hard-hitting satire on the embarrassing condition of India is tainted with the orientalist bias. But there is trace of actuality and reality in the description of different conditions of India. Even in the amorphous and disheveled city of Delhi, empty road, scattered rubbish, violent spree of mob mentality and looming threat of

wilderness are clearly found. Adiga goes so far as to declare that in India civilization can appear and disappear within five minutes. The following excerpt depicts the condition as it really is:

Now the road emptied. The rain was coming down lightly. If we kept going this way, we would come to the place where visiting heads of state, like you, always stay. But Delhi is a city where civilization can appear and disappear within five minutes. On either side of us right now there was just wilderness and rubbish. There was soggy black mud everywhere. Picking my way over mud and rainwater, I squatted near the left rear wheel, which was hidden from the road by the body of the car. (281)

Broken roads, muddy areas, chaotic conditions of people dwelling around this area are described in the above cited extract. Adiga is vocal about the fragility and vulnerability of civilization. It is funny and humorous to say that civilization appears and disappears within five minutes. It shows that if civilization suffers, the root cause of the disintegration of civilization would be the lack of idea and awareness about management of trivial things of life. Hence, the author ascribes the sluggishness and lethargy of Indian people as the inception of social disgrace and disintegration.

IV. Adiga's Orientalist Reflection in *The White Tiger*

The core finding of this research is that Adiga falls prey to plenty of orientalist biases while depicting the contemporary India. The contemporary India has witnessed many examples of transformations due to its assimilation of the westernized modernity. The effects of globalization and the phenomenon of technology transfer have altered India. India has presented as the emerging superpower of the world. It is well-equipped with nuclear weapon. Social modernization is afoot. But the author hardly looks into these aspects of India. He finds India in the dilapidated conditions. The conditions of India and Indians are hardly different from the conditions described by the famous orientalist.

In *The White Tiger* dozens of orientalist images and stereotypes are used to portray the darker side of India. The gaze of author is directed towards the darker sides of the present day India. The irrational mindsets of Indian, exotic and inscrutable nature of Indian landscapes, cultural escapism and morbid Indian passion for spirituality and penance are still found in the undefiled form. The light of modernity, technological transfer, feminism and booming economic growth have still not penetrated the darkest core of the Indian subcontinent. Caste contamination, social immobility and superstition, dowry custom, illiteracy and other forms of social biases are still pervasive throughout the Indian subcontinent.

Balram Halwai is the leading character of this novel. He comes from the poor village of Bihar. He represents subaltern class. Although he belongs to the subaltern class, he still has zeal and vivacious will to succeed no matter how harsh atmosphere he lives in. he is afraid of the poverty of Laxmangarh, a backward place of Bihar. When he is compelled to work for the wealthy landlord so that his parents would get sufficient money to give dowry to his sister, he feels deeply infuriated at the social

injustice and compulsion created by the corrupt society. He tries his best to escape from the purgatorial life of Laxmangarh. Though his life is circumscribed by poverty, illiteracy, starvation and other atrocious practices, his ambition to be prosperous and powerful is not hindered by all these social restrictions. He goes to Delhi in search of better chance. In Delhi he sees large buildings and smooth means of transportations. The busy schedules of people, traffic jams, and amorphous city life make him nauseous. He works as the driver of Mr. Ashok. From Balram Halwai, it becomes clear that corruptions, smuggling of drugs, modern forms of slavery, prostitutions and threat from the underworld have mushroomed in the contemporary India. When a suitable chance comes, Balram Halwai kills his master Mr. Ashok, steals his money, bribes the police and finally disappears into Bangalore.

In Bangalore he struggles to become the famous tycoon. With the money he brought, he establishes his own business and then earns huge and hefty money. He does not hesitate to describe the modern Bangalore. Bangalore is the symbol of India's appropriation and importation of western technology. Bangalore alone is sufficient to show how much India has achieved in the field of information technology and technology transfer. The rosy side of Bangalore is almost proverbial. But Balram Halwai does not look into the bright side of Bangalore. On the contrary, he makes an authentic observation on the concept of Bangalore as the pride and prejudice of modern India. He calls Bangalore a living hell. This hell-hole is worst than jungle. Those who live in Bangalore are called brutes. On the basis of his credible survey, he is making this sort of statement.

However modernized Bangalore and other Indian cities might be, it is imbued with elements of backwardness. India is on its way to modernity, globalization and other progressive movements. On this way it has achieved lots of progress also. But

tradition and customs of India have been posing threat and hindrance to India's movement towards paradigm shift. Still orientalist ethos and biases are found in the shifting locale and landscape of India. Thus it would be safe to say that orientalist ethos is projected in the depiction of contemporary India in *The White Tiger*.

Works Cited

- Adiga, Arivindo. *The White Tiger*. Great Britain: MPG Books Ltd., 2008.
- Bekhard, Joobin. *Metropolitan Trend and Neo-Orientalism*. London: Harper Collins, 2005.
- Esposito, Jones. *Resurgence of Colonial Legacy*. New York: Longman-Allyn, 2002.
- Grmasci, Antonio. *Hegemony and Horror of Ideology*. Boston: Houghton, 2006.
- Hedge, Radha S. *Class Struggle and Conviction*. London: Macmillan, 2009.
- Kepel, Gilles. *Media and Neo-Orientalism*. London: Longman, 2001.
- Khan, M. G. *Neo-Colonial Thrust*. Calcutta: Vidhyasagar Publication, 2010.
- Lewis, Bernard. *Islam and Eccentricity*. London: Harper Collins, 2006.
- Marrancia, Gabriel. *Effectivity and Spirit: Critique of Neocolonial Legacy*. London: Macmillan, 2004.
- Mendes, Anna Christie. *Secular Blasphemy of Colonialism*. New Delhi: Jasmine Publication, 2012.
- Mitra, Subodh. *Pitfalls of Postcolonial Exuberance*. New York: Greenwood Publication, 2010.
- Plock, James C. *Quest for Alternative Resistance*. New York: Penguin, 2002.
- Rai, Ekta. *Marxism and Its Shifting Tenet*. New Delhi: Pilgrim Publication, 2010.
- Richie, Lionel. *Disintegration of Postcolonial Emancipation*. New York: Rutledge, 2012.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Penguin, 1987.
- Sairam, Nirmal. *Colonial Legacy and Enlightenment*. New York: Diamond Publication, 2011.
- Sebastian, James. *Politics of Resistance*. New York: Canon Gate, 2012.
- Sen, Bikram. *Imperialism and Cultural Legacy*. London: Peter Publication, 2001.

Shrinivas, M.N. *Rhetoric of Resistance*. Westport: Houghton, 2009.

Singh, Amritjeet. *Indian Ethos of Redemption*. New York: Norton, 2012.

Tajfal, Herman. *Power and Resistance*. New York: Penguin, 2004.